

3Q8 PSYCHOLOGICAL DATA :
DEVELOPMENT

the life of the child afterwards very different from what it was before.

This repression of the central emotional conflict itself contributes to the child's growing interest in and appreciation of reality.

(13) The typical attitude of the child in the middle years of the latency period (say eight to eleven) is, then, this testing of reality, not only in the shape of mechanical causality and the physical world, but of the human world also. He wants to understand the real behaviour of people, whether those immediately around him, or those of whom he hears and reads in the larger social world—in travel, adventure, exploration, science and history. We are all familiar with the way in which the general interests of the child characteristically become more matter-of-fact. His reading interests, his handicrafts and his dramatic play alike show this increasing emphasis on reality. Fairy tales and romance are gradually replaced by history and a concern with real people of the present day.

What this means from the point of view of his inner mental life is that the amount of anxiety arising from his deepest conflicts has been distinctly lessened, as an outcome of all the various influences we have been considering. It thus becomes more possible for him to deal with what remains by this working out in real experience. Since primitive phantasies about his parents and other children dominate his mind less, fully, he is more free to look at them as they really are, to find out how they do in fact behave.

Underneath that comparatively easy reserve which at this period he shows towards adults, there is always a great deal of suspicion, always a watching to see whether grown-ups are honest or dishonest, reliable or untrustworthy, cruel and

selfish or humane and considerate; to see whether or not they have the same secret hostilities and secret sexual indulgences and the same inconsistencies as the child knows within himself. It is this watching and testing attitude which makes it so much more difficult for an adult to win the full confidence of the child now. Both in ordinary life and in the analytic situation, the child will watch and thoroughly test the behaviour of any adult who seeks his confidence, before he is able to give it.

This ability to watch and observe the real behaviour of